





MORMON SETTLERS

The Mormon pioneers emigrated to the valley of Great Salt Lake in 1847 on what was an arduous and death-inflicting journey. Since they had been exiled from their beautiful city of Nauvoo, Illinois, their greatest desire was to find a place to build a new city of Zion. The mountain desert in Mexican Territory was to be their new home. Brigham Young had envisioned the west as a place of economic security for the Mormons. Through his wise leadership and the industry of the pioneers, the Mormons prospered. The success of the Mormons in establishing a stable economy is an outstanding example of dedication.

Mormon headquarters were established in the arid and salty Great Salt Lake Valley in July, and by the end of the year, most of the surrounding regions, including Utah Valley had been explored, surveyed, and closely analyzed. Leonard Arrington reports in his economic history of the Great Basin:

All of this research . . . confirmed the wisdom of the original intention to locate in the Salt Lake Valley. Cache Valley was too cold; Utah Valley was inhabited by Indians. Other valleys were too dry.

William Clayton, Mormon pioneer, indicates in his journal that Indian threats were a main reason for not immediately establishing Mormon colonies near Utah Lake and on Provo Bench:

The Utah tribe of Indians inhabit the region around the Utah Lake and are bad people. If they catch a man alone, they are sure to rob and abuse him if they don't kill him, but parties of men are in no danger.

George Washington Bean, Mormon pioneer and explorer, recorded in his autobiography that in 1849, Brigham Young sent a group of colonists to settle the Provo River area, "for the purpose of farming and fishing and of instructing the Indians in cultivating the earth and of teaching them civiliz: n." Bean recorded the account of the direct meeting between the Mormon colonists and Indians on Provo Bench. Within two and one-half miles of Timpanogos River (Provo River), the colony of pioneer families were greeted:

. . . by a Young Indian Brave on horseback dashing toward us as fast as he could ride, throwing his arms and performing all sorts of wild gesticulations. When he got within about six rods of our head team, he jumped off his horse, threw his buffalo robe across our path and warned us not to pass that designated point. The Indians had got some idea of our intention to make settlement at the Timpanogos River, and this young brave named Ang-a-Te-Wats volunteered to stop us until an understanding could be arrived at. Dimick Huntington, our interpreter, told over all our good desires and intentions and that President Young, the Great Mormon Chief had sent us, and that we would like to be *Too-ege-tid-a-boo*—good friends—with the natives and do them

much good if allowed to settle with them. The little brave dashed off to report to the tribe, and we slowly moved on. Presently a large party met us with the War Chief at their head, and we all stopped and talked the matter over again. The party seemed satisfied, and we moved on and were allowed to camp on the north side of the river. Many had sucker fish for dinner, but father and I had a fat stewed crane I killed with his rifle during the day.

Natural resources were soon utilized by the Mormon settlers. The colonists quickly built a big fort with twelve-foot long pickets, private corrals, gates, and houses all out of cottonwood timber. Cottonwood timber was plentiful along the river.

A controversial issue between the Mormons and the Indians was the slave trade. The following account by J. A. Jones illustrates how difficult it was for the Mormons to civilize the Indians and convince them of the evils of slavery:

Stopping this slave business helped to sour some of Walker's band [a powerful Indian band]. They were in the habit of raiding on the Pahutes and low tribes, taking their children prisoners and selling them. Next year when they came up and camped on the Provo Bench, they had some Indian children for sale. They offered them to the Mormons who declined buying. Arapine, Walker's brother, became enraged saying that the Mormons had stopped the Mexicans from buying these children; that they had no right to do so, unless they bought them themselves. Several of us were present when he took one of these children by the heels and dashed its brains out on the hard ground, after which he threw the body towards us, telling us we had no hearts, or we would have bought it and saved its life. This was a strange argument, but it was the argument of an enraged savage. I never heard of any successful attempts to buy children afterwards by the Mexicans. If done at all, it was secretly.

The Mexicans were prevented from buying Indian slaves because the Mormons took them to court and prosecuted them.

MILITARY CAMPS

In August of 1857, word came to Salt Lake that United States Army troops led by General Sidney Johnston were advancing toward Deseret Territory because of presidential orders from James B. Buchanan. Johnston's Army spent that winter at Camp Scott near Fort Bridger. By March 1858, Governor Young had made the decision that Salt Lake Valley would have to be evacuated and, if needs be, the buildings burned to the ground to avoid government suppression. Residents of Salt Lake Valley moved south to Utah Valley across the Provo Bench. Over 30,000 people moved into Utah Valley from northern areas. By the end of May the entire move was accomplished.

On 26 June 1858 Johnston's Army found Salt Lake City empty. He and his troops marched on to Cedar Valley, where they established Camp Floyd.

The Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for Tuesday, 26 October 1858 indicates that General Johnston was invited to move his troops from Camp Floyd to the Provo Bench:

A company of merchants and campfollowers have gone to establish a city on the Provo Bench to be called Centre City. It is reported that they have invited General Johnston to locate a military post there, and move in the spring with his troops.

Governor Cumming requested President Young to send men to occupy all the land. The president [Brigham Young] said he did not wish to interfere, but would let them build a city, it will be a long time first, unless they get the "Mormons" to build it for them, and then they would cheat them out of their pay; he would like them to get the apostates to build the city for them.

A military post was not established on Provo Bench. Eventually, Johnston's troops left Utah, and the Salt Lake City residents moved back to their homes. Because their settlement in Utah Valley was temporary, these people had little economic effect on the benchland area.

The Nauvoo Legion, which had been partially reorganized in Utah on 27 March 1852, used the bench for their military drills. Andrew Jenson, LDS Church historian, wrote in his autobiography:

In October 1870, I had my first experience in military training, a county military drill being held at Camp Burton, located on the so-called Dry Creek, on the Provo Bench, about four miles southeast of Pleasant Grove. About 4,000 men were gathered from different parts of Utah County, and the drill was carried out with strict discipline and order. This was a part of the annual drilling of the Nauvoo Legion. I rather enjoyed the exercises and at once felt a desire to train as a soldier and aspire to become an officer in that military organization. This, however, was not to be in my case, for

after two more annual drills, which I attended and enjoyed, orders were given by Acting Governor Shaffer of Utah for the "Mormons" to cease their military evolutions.

On 30 July 1870, Fort Rawlins, a temporary military fort was established on the bench two and one-half miles north of the Provo River. The military was stationed there to protect Provo citizens from Indians, but a permanent fort was never built. For several reasons, the temporary fort was closed down by June 1871.

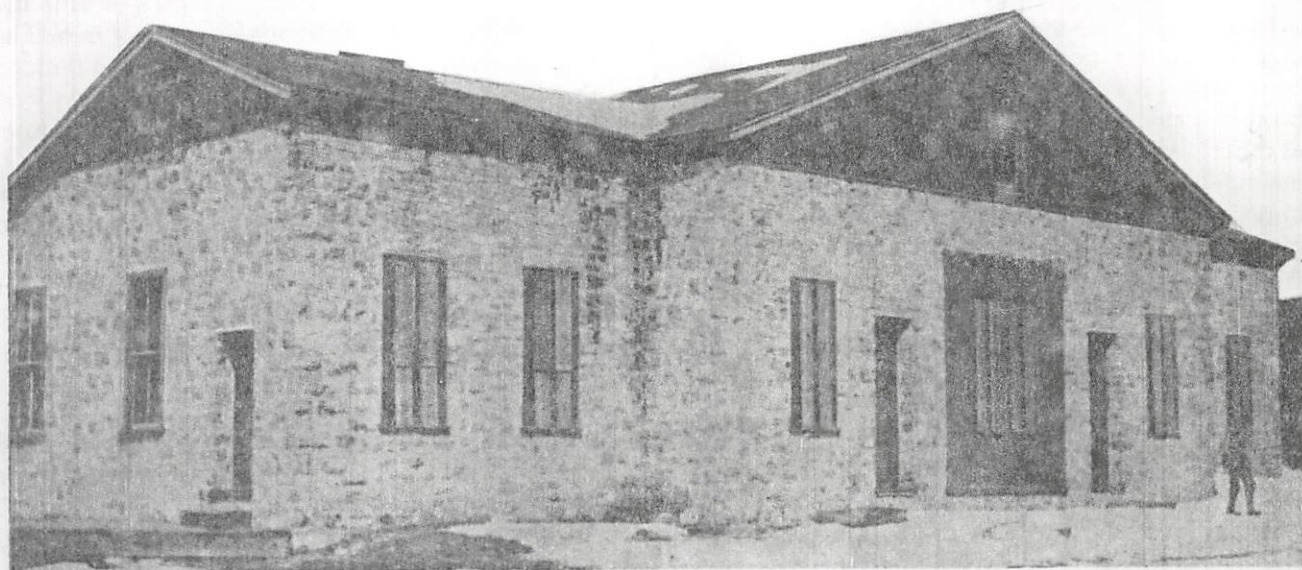
Fort Rawlins was undesirable from the viewpoints of the command and the soldiers. There was poor communication with higher command and the facilities were poor. Contempt from the townspeople worsened these problems to the point of open rebellion among some 20 of the 40 soldiers stationed at the fort.

On 22 September 1890, drunken soldiers marched prominent Provo men down West Main Street at gunpoint. Besides the verbal abuse inflicted on these men, property damage was incurred by other citizens whose houses were shot at by the passing soldiers.

Because Fort Rawlins existed for such a short time, it had little economic effect on the benchland area.

HYDROELECTRIC POWER

In 1890, Mr. L. L. Nunn successfully built and operated the first industrial hydroelectric power plant, the Ames Plant, near Telluride, Colorado. It transmitted alternating current at high voltage three miles away. In 1894, he began looking for possible hydroelectric power sites farther west in the Rocky Mountains. He chose the Provo River as the site for



NUNN'S STATION, PROVO CANYON
Courtesy Utah Power and Light Company

"It Happened in Orem,"

The Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for Tuesday, 26 October 1858 indicates that General Johnston was invited to move his troops from Camp Floyd to the Provo Bench:

A company of merchants and campfollowers have gone to establish a city on the Provo Bench to be called Centre City. It is reported that they have invited General Johnston to locate a military post there, and move in the spring with his troops.

Governor Cumming requested President Young to send men to occupy all the land. The president [Brigham Young] said he did not wish to interfere, but would let them build a city, it will be a long time first, unless they get the "Mormons" to build it for them, and then they would cheat them out of their pay; he would like them to get the apostates to build the city for them.

A military post was not established on Provo Bench. Eventually, Johnston's troops left Utah, and the Salt Lake City residents moved back to their homes. Because their settlement in Utah Valley was temporary, these people had little economic effect on the benchland area.

The Nauvoo Legion, which had been partially reorganized in Utah on 27 March 1852, used the bench for their military drills. Andrew Jenson, LDS Church historian, wrote in his autobiography:

In October 1870, I had my first experience in military training, a county military drill being held at Camp Burton, located on the so-called Dry Creek, on the Provo Bench, about four miles southeast of Pleasant Grove. About 4,000 men were gathered from different parts of Utah County, and the drill was carried out with strict discipline and order. This was a part of the annual drilling of the Nauvoo Legion. I rather enjoyed the exercises and at once felt a desire to train as a soldier and aspire to become an officer in that military organization. This, however, was not to be in my case, for

after two more annual drills, which I attended and enjoyed, orders were given by Acting Governor Shaffer of Utah for the "Mormons" to cease their military evolutions.

On 30 July 1870, Fort Rawlins, a temporary military fort was established on the bench two and one-half miles north of the Provo River. The military was stationed there to protect Provo citizens from Indians, but a permanent fort was never built. For several reasons, the temporary fort was closed down by June 1871.

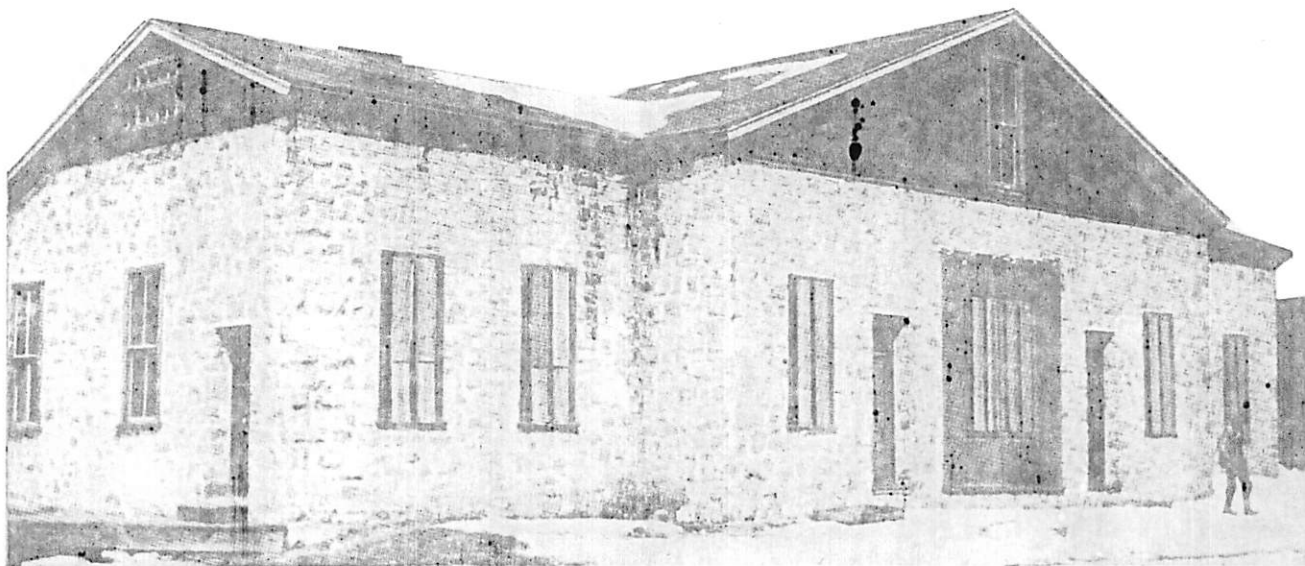
Fort Rawlins was undesirable from the viewpoints of the command and the soldiers. There was poor communication with higher command and the facilities were poor. Contempt from the townspeople worsened these problems to the point of open rebellion among some 20 of the 40 soldiers stationed at the fort.

On 22 September 1890, drunken soldiers marched prominent Provo men down West Main Street at gunpoint. Besides the verbal abuse inflicted on these men, property damage was incurred by other citizens whose houses were shot at by the passing soldiers.

Because Fort Rawlins existed for such a short time, it had little economic effect on the benchland area.

HYDROELECTRIC POWER

In 1890, Mr. L. L. Nunn successfully built and operated the first industrial hydroelectric power plant, the Ames Plant, near Telluride, Colorado. It transmitted alternating current at high voltage three miles away. In 1894, he began looking for possible hydroelectric power sites farther west in the Rocky Mountains. He chose the Provo River as the site for



NUNN'S STATION, PROVO CANYON
Courtesy Utah Power and Light Company

the Nunn's Station which was operational in 1897. By the next year the turbine provided 750 kilowatts of power to a gold mine and a mill in Mercur, Utah, thirty-two miles away. This was a milestone in the history of electrical transmission because this electricity was being transmitted by the first 44,000-volt transmission line built in the United States.

In 1900, the Telluride Power Company was formed. The Nunn's Station was soon replaced by the Olmstead Plant which became operational in 1904. It supplied surrounding areas and increasingly distant areas (no farther than 50 miles away) with electricity.

The Olmstead Plant was unique in that it was equipped to provide on-the-job training in electrical



OLMSTEAD PLANT
Courtesy BYU Archives

engineering for its employees. Mr. L. L. Nunn conceived this company-employee relationship. His brother, Paul Nunn, directed the program, also used at other plants, that eventually became the Telluride Institute. The Telluride Association, as it was named in 1911, is presently seated at Cornell University. The impact, though, of that early program is remarkable. At the time, the Olmstead Plant offered the only competent training program in electrical engineering besides the program taught at Ohio State. Some young men from the bench area were trained under this two-year program and became outstanding engineers.

In 1912, Utah Power and Light Company was formed; it purchased the Telluride Power Company, which included the Olmstead Plant. This plant is still operated under the direction of Utah Power and Light Company.

TRANSPORTATION

State Street in Orem was originally established as part of the great corridor highway that linked Salt Lake City with Southern Utah and California. State Street opened for travel in the 1850's, was eight rods wide and ran between what is now 2000 South and 2000 North in Orem. What originally was a dusty, rutted, rocky road in the summer, and a muddy, sloshy road in the winter is now a paved, modern road that is part of U. S. Highway 91.

The transition from buggies and carriages to automobiles did not occur overnight on Provo Bench. The evolution of modern transportation was gradual, yet inevitable and helpful to the benchland. The creaky Model-T's and the fragile trucks that appeared early in the century on the bench can't compare with the cars and diesel trucks that now traverse Utah's highways, but they did increase trade with neighboring towns and cities.

Many roads were graveled in order to strengthen them. The old Provo Canyon Road was graveled in 1911-12. Early settlers hauled loads of rock from their benchland farms to gravel the old Canyon Road. The highway department crushed the rock to make the hard gravel. As transportation improved, trade and commercial activity increased.

By 1910, Provo Bench was becoming a prosperous agricultural community. Accessibility to outside markets inevitably required a railroad. Electrically driven railroads were fairly new, so it is understandable why in 1913 "newspapers of Utah were virtually unanimous in proclaiming the building of the Orem Railroad the biggest event of that year." The Salt Lake and Utah Railroad, or the Orem Line as it was called by many people, was a 67-mile electric rail line financed and constructed by A. J. Orem and Company under the direction of Walter C. Orem. The line from Salt Lake to Provo, which passed through Provo Bench, was opened for electric car service on 24 July, 1913. By 1917, the Orem Line extended from Salt Lake to Payson.

A railroad depot was eventually built in Orem, but because of highway improvements and increased use of automobiles in the 1920's, passenger business declined on the Orem Line. In the 1930's, the line went into receivership, and a foreclosure sale of all properties took place in the first few months of 1938.

A NEW NAME FOR THE BENCH

Some people on the bench recognized the need for an organization that would promote better business conditions. One day in April, 1914, Oscar H. Anderson, a salesman, rode on horseback to nearly every house on the bench trying to get residents to attend a commercial meeting to be held at Parcell's

"It Happened in Orem"